

## The Knowledge Bank at The Ohio State University

### Ohio State Engineer

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### Dr. Arnstein on Education

The Engineers' Club is to be complimented for securing as interesting and outstanding a speaker for the Engineers' Banquet as Dr. Karl Arnstein, Chief Engineer of the Goodyear Corporation and a designer of the "Macon."

Dr. Arnstein's talk appealed to us particularly because he made one important point. He said, in effect, that the large engineering schools, such as Ohio State, put out into the world large numbers of routine engineers. These men, who, to be sure, have a very excellent training, are suited only to solve problems. In other words, they have learned so much that they can't think.

This point—and we want to make it clear that this is only a personal opinion—can apply very well to our own school. Partly due to the fault of the curriculum, and partly due to the fault of the students themselves, undergraduates have no opportunity for real creative work. There is a certain amount of work given to each man in more or less fairly measured rations. If he does not accomplish this work the first time, he is given another opportunity to do it. Even if he manages to get it the first time he is so soon deluged with other tasks, that whatever he has learned is crowded out of his mind. We often hear graduates say, "I never understood this until I worked it out in practice." Real understanding, and with it true memory, only come after a thorough and leisurely digestion of the problem.

For a man wishing a concentrated technical training in the shortest possible time, our educational system is admirably suited. But the man wishing a real education should take it a bit more slowly. He will want more time to think.

### The Parable of Backing Up

Saying something that has been said before but saying it in a new way is just as good as saying something new, so we reprint the following editorial from the *Nebraska Blue Print*.

There was a long freight train, and it stood upon a track, and it essayed to go forward, but it could not go.

For the train was heavy and the track was wet, and the wheels of the locomotive went round and round, neither did the sand enable them to grip the track.

And I stood and watched it, and I wondered if it could make its getaway.

But the engineer was wise in his generation, and he backed up a few inches, and then quickly threw his lever ahead, and opened the throttle tolerably wide.

And the engine started ahead, and the first car started with it. And the second car felt the jerk, and started with it, and the third likewise.

Then did all the cars fall in line, each one of them with a jerk and a change of its mind, and the engineer sat in his seat and whistled a quiet tune, for he had everything coming along fine.

Now what he had done was only this, that he gave unto himself the benefit of the fraction of an inch of slack that is between each car and its neighbor, so that he did not have to start the first car until the engine had gone ahead for that fraction, and the second car started not until the first was going.

And each car gave unto his a little slack, and all the time the engine and the moving cars were gathering momentum. And by the time the last car started, it was with a jerk that overcame all its hesitation and then some.

Now there are plenty of good people who fail because they never learn this little trick.

They undertake to start the Universe in the way it should go, and the Universe is conservative.

And they pull and puff around and wear flat places on the rail, and get red in the face, but arrive nowhere.

But the wise man learneth the value of a little slack in the couplings, and even the wisdom of backing up a little that he may the more surely go forward.